

Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 17, 2014

BLM Southern Nevada District Office, 4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr., Las Vegas, Nevada

Resource Advisory Council members present and category represented:

Jason Higgins, Chairman	Energy & Minerals Development	Category 1
Robert Adams	Permitted Recreation	Category 1
Susan Agee	Grazing / Ranching	Category 1
Elise McAlister	Dispersed Recreation	Category 2
Matthew Tuma	Environmental / Wildlife	Category 2
Ronda Hornbeck	Public at Large	Category 3
Stan Smith	Academic / UNLV	Category 3
Lorinda Wichman	Elected Official	Category 3

Resource Advisory Council members absent and category represented:

Douglas "Stretch" Baker	Transportation / ROW	Category 1
Gracian Uhalde	Grazing/Ranching	Category 1
Don Davis	Wild Horse / Burro	Category 2
Vacant	Archaeology / Historic	Category 2
Vacant	Environment	Category 2
Annette Harris	Native American	Category 3
Vacant	State Agency Representative	Category 3

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives present:

Tim Smith, Des. Federal Official	BLM Southern Nevada District Manager
Victoria Barr	BLM Ely Associate District Manager
Tim Coward	BLM Tonopah Acting Field Manager
Chris Hanefeld	BLM RAC Coordinator / Public Affairs
Kirsten Cannon	BLM SNDO Public Affairs Specialist
Mark Smith	BLM RAC Travel Coordinator
Gayle Marrs-Smith	BLM Las Vegas Field Manager
Deb MacNeill	BLM PFO Field Manager
Karla Norris	BLM SNPLMA Assistant District Manager

Public

Gerald Hillier	Quadstate Local Government Authority
Mark Silverstein	Clark County Department of Aviation
Mike Zaman	Pahrump
Vinny Spotleson	Sen Reid's Office
Varlin Higbee	Caliente VTC - Public
Bevin Lister	Caliente VTC - Public
Pete Delmue	Caliente VTC - Public
Fred Stahan	Caliente VTC - Public
Adriana	Ely VTC - Public
Kevin Philipe	Ely VTC - Public

A copy of each attachment is listed in the text of or at the end of these minutes and is also on file with the official copy of the minutes in the Ely District Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to review said minutes should contact Chris Hanefeld, public affairs specialist, at (775) 289-1842.

9:00 a.m. Welcome & Introductions: Jason Higgins, RAC Chairman. The RAC members, BLM managers and staff introduced themselves.

9:10 a.m. Jason Higgins introduced the minutes and since they had been distributed prior to the meeting asked "if there are any corrections?" No corrections were offered ... "the minutes are approved as distributed." He then moved on to the meeting agenda.

9:15 a.m. Tim Smith gave a BLM Statewide update covering Lands, Renewables and Recreation. He discussed the Resource Management Plan comments and advised the Mojave-Southern RAC that it might be early to mid-September before we can expect to review comments.

The Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) program and possible gathers were discussed and he informed that while the program was small in Southern Nevada there had been approximately 100 horses removed in Humboldt. Statewide in FY 14 there were 285 hoses removed. This fiscal year there likely would be smaller roundups due to the availability of space in which to house the horses.

Oil and Gas lease sales was a topic with recent sales having grossed 2 million dollars. And continuing that trend today, 7/17/2014, Battle Mountain was hosting a sale. Ely would also have an upcoming sale in December. While SNDO does not have Oil & Gas Lease sales the trend will continue across the rest of the state.

9:30 a.m. Tim Smith continued with the District Update for the BLM Southern Nevada District and that document is attached.

9:40 a.m. Tim Coward gave the District Update for the BLM battle Mountain District and that document is also attached.

9:50 a.m. Victoria Barr gave the District Update for the Ely District and that document is attached.

After the District Manager report Victoria Barr moved into a discussion of the Caliente, Nevada Area TRAIL Conceptual Plan (see attachment). Victoria gave a history of the project an overview of the 40 miles of trails that would be laid out and developed. The possibility of receiving some SNPLMA funding was discussed and a vigorous discussion between the board members ensued. The topic of whether the trail might be multi-use was a major topic. The proposal was warmly received and the board asked to be kept up on the status as the proposal progressed.

10:00 a.m. Jason Higgins opened the discussion of the committee reports with the news that there was a resignation that affected the Planning Committee. In the meantime Jason Higgins will take over that role. He then moved into an update on the SNDO RMP. He and Tim Smith had a discussion of the difficulties that had been encountered with the original timeline, the remaining hurdles to be addressed and the new target date for the RMP to be out. Tim Smith informed the board that as of now the new target date was early September.

With the new RMP the focus of being able to meet and generate good feedback on the RMP was a major concern and how a timeline could be developed around that for the Mojave-Southern RAC members to review and present informed comments. The decision to have member's first focus on their area of expertise was thought to be the

most productive. Further if a 5th meeting was needed to facilitate the feedback then Chris Hanefeld, with coordination of Jason and Tim could set that up when, and if, needed.

Elise McAllister recapped the three motions offered at the March meeting for the Recreation Subcommittee. She offered everyone who wanted to attend the Subcommittee meeting to please join them.

- 10:20 a.m. Jason Higgins offered a Motion to Recess for a period of 20 minutes and the board seconded.
- 10:40 a.m. Jason Higgins called the meeting back to order and the board meeting resumed. Jason asked Mark Smith to discuss the process and requirements for reimbursement of invitational Travelers. Mark explained that existing members with profiles already set-up in Concur only had to forward their receipts for input. New members would have to have profiles created in Concur before reimbursement could happen.
- 10:50 a.m. Jason Higgins continued the discussion of the subcommittee meetings with Lorinda Wichman, Elise McAllister and Stan Smith joining in. The question of the potential need for having a separate Energy Subcommittee was brought up. The idea was thought to be a good idea and should probably be brought up to the full board through a motion at the next MOSO-RAC subcommittee meeting. More to come on this idea then, other topics for Subcommittee meetings were the Wild Horse and Burro program and the Conveyance of Public Lands.
- 11:00 a.m. Jason Higgins opened the floor for Public Comment.

Gerry Hillier, Executive Director of the Quadstate Local Government Authority spoke on the Desert Tortoise issue. He asked about the BLMs use of Rapid EcoRegional Assessments. His concern was the projections with since it was just a one-shot snap-shot. He offered to brief the BLM on the subject matter if they wanted. He also asked if there was a movement to institute the data. He further asked how recovery action plan proposals were being integrated in the RMP.

Varlin Higbee from the Lincoln County Grazing Association spoke about the over-grazing issue caused by too many horses on the land and water resources.

Bevan Lister from Lincoln County also spoke about the land and water resources being over used by wild horse and burros and he detrimental effect they are having. He suggested that Sage Grouse habitat was being destroyed and that they must move, leave or die. That all wildlife are being negatively impacted by the Horse population overgrazing. That water that should be available for fire and permitted cattle was disappearing due to the over-population of WH&B. He stated that 78% of Nevada Allotments were not achieving standards because of the over-population problem.

Pete Delmue, a Lincoln County rancher, also spoke about the problems caused by the over-population of WH&B. That springs on private lands were being damaged by these horses. He states that he has seen as many as 40 horses grazing on private property.

Fred Stahan, rancher, communicated the same problems with the WH&B coming onto private property and drinking his cattle's water sources dry.

11:25 a.m. Jason Higgins thanked the public for their participation. After a discussion of the upcoming Public Land Days event at Logandale in September Jason Higgins made a motion to recess for Lunch. Seconded by voice acclimation.

11:55 The Mojave-Southern RAC broke for lunch, returning at 12:55 p.m.

12:55 Jason Higgins, Board Chair, called the meeting back to order and asked Tim Smith to speak about the status of the RMP. Tim spoke about the unique and important opportunity the Planning Subcommittee would have in helping craft inputs to the RMP this year. At this point he introduced Lee Kirk, SNDO RMP Project Manager.

Lee Kirk began by acknowledging the critical role the Mojave-Southern RAC has in helping create this 15 to 20 year management plan which will govern the direction of public land management in southern Nevada. Lee discussed the history of the complicated path which had led the SNDO to bring him in as Project Manager after a failed attempt at having an outside contractor develop and craft the RMP. This was especially helpful for the new board members.

He laid out a roadmap of where we had been, where we were at presently and where we were going in the future.

Of particular interest was his discussion of what went into "Making Effective Comments." An effective comment not only identifies a problem or desire but also has in it a definable and achievable outcome. While Form Letters are most often the source of comments too often they offer little substantively. As a tool to measure public sentiment on an issue though they can be helpful.

He reiterated that what was presently working would be carried over into the new RMP. Among other things his discussion topics included lands and realty, recreation, rivers, travel management, minerals and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. This last topic offered the opportunity for a good discussion on the definition of "Lands with Wilderness Characteristics." Ultimately only Congress can designate any land Wilderness.

The Board members were especially interested in the upcoming RMP and very receptive to Lee's briefing. They reminded Lee that the Urban/Suburban/Rural interface that exists in the Southern Nevada region was something that the Board took very seriously as no one point of view was more or less important than another. Lee finished his presentation at this point and thanked everyone for allowing him the opportunity to address the Board on this very important topic.

1:30 p.m. Jason Higgins introduced Karla Norris to the Board. Karla is the BLM's Assistant District Manager for the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA). Karla gave the board a thorough overview via a PowerPoint presentation which covered the history and breakdown of how funds were apportioned under SNPLMA.

1:50 p.m. Norris gave a briefing on the SNPLMA Strategic Plan and the upcoming Round 15 Proposals. Additionally she explained how Round 15 proposals would be different from prior rounds. Elise McAllister commented that she was thankful that SNPLMA was being

used to help explain to the public just how important the desert we have is and why it must be preserved.

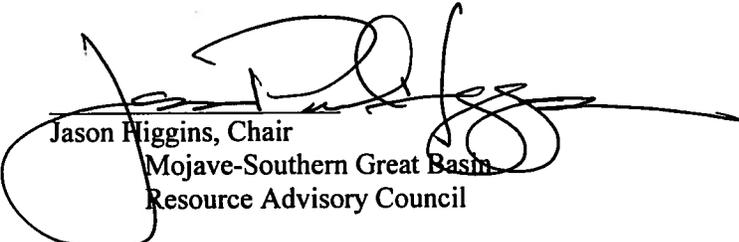
2:10 p.m. Victoria Barr asked about using SNPLMA for trail projects and said that they were working on criteria now to include youth conservation corps to help. Karla explained collaborative efforts between groups and any matching funds that could be generated were always well received by the Executive Committee.

2:15 p.m. Jason Higgins asked that members send him agenda topics for the next board meeting as well as ideas for the subcommittee meetings.

2:16 p.m. ADJOURN

APPROVED BY:

Date: 18 SEPT 2014


Jason Higgins, Chair
Mojave-Southern Great Basin
Resource Advisory Council

- Minutes provided by Mark Smith, Southern Nevada District Office -

Attachments:

1. BLM Battle Mountain (Tonopah) District update
2. BLM Ely District update
3. BLM Southern Nevada District update
4. BLM Recreation Strategy: Connecting with Communities (brochure)
5. Caliente, Nevada Area Trail Conceptual Plan
6. Map (handout)